DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 761 FL 024 704

AUTHOR Sutarso, Pudjiati
TITLE Students' Attitude Toward Foreign Language (SAFL).
PUB DATE 1996-11-00
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (Tuscaloosa, AL, November 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Anxiety; College Students; *Communication Apprehension; Higher Education; *Language Attitudes; *Learning Motivation; Parent Influence; *Second Languages; Self Esteem; Sex Differences; *Student Attitudes; Student Interests; Student Motivation; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

This study investigated variables associated with students' attitudes about second language use and second language learning. Subjects were 173 university students in foreign language classes. The questionnaire consisted of 27 Likert-type statements addressing such issues in language learning as performance anxiety, self-confidence, interest in languages, family influence, differences in language ability based on sex, language learning motivation, expenditure of effort, and the instructor's role. Results show an average score for most items indicating a positive attitude, suggesting that in this population, attitudes toward foreign languages and language learning are positive. It is also concluded that the instrument is useful in assessing students' attitudes toward languages. Contains 19 references. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 410 761

STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN LANGUAGE (SAFL)

by

PUDJIATI SUTARSO

Paper Presented at the Annual Mid-South Educational Research Association

November 1996

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

FL024704

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Pudjiati Sutarso
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN LANGUAGE (SAFL)

Today, schools have introduced numerous programs and activities about multicultural education. The programs are implemented based on the belief that multicultural education prepares students for life in an ethnically diverse society and also results in cognitive and affective benefit (Webb, 1990). It prepares students to understand other ethnic groups, appreciate different cultures, and defuse interracial conflicts. Much of the professional literature has indicated that a traditional counseling model, one that has been derived from a traditional white middle class model, may not be effective in working with culturally diverse clients (Rifenbary, 1991). Moreover, in the global world now more than ever, a clear knowledge and understanding of languages, cultures, and custom is essential to successfully marketing products and services around the world (Abdraboh, 1987).

Many ways have been proposed to promote understanding other cultures such as a cross cultural training program, students exchange program, anthropological participant observation. A less expensive one, since a language is a "mirror" of culture, is to study the language. By studying the language, students know the situations in which language

is used, learn about the customs and the culture of its society.

Many times foreign language teachers find that some students are able to learn a foreign language easily but others students learn it with great difficulty (Bilyeu, 1982). Students who have some difficulties in learning foreign language often are referred to as lower scorers or underachievers (Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft & Evers, 1987; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, Smythe, Clement & Gliksman, 1976; Pimsleur, 1968; Pimsleur, Sunderland & McIntyre, 1964). If students have experienced repeated failures in a college foreign language classroom, they are sometimes identified as having language learning disabilities (Ganschow & Sparks, 1987; Lefebvre, 1984; Pompian & Thum, 1988).

Some researchers have investigated to explain why some students have difficulties in learning foreign languages. Among the explanations are: (1) different intelligence to learn a foreign language (Carroll, 1990; Genessee, 1976; Pimsleur, 1963), (2) native language skills (Ganschow, Sparks, Javorsky, Pohlman & Bishop-Marbury, 1991; Skehan, 1993; Sparks & Ganschow, 1991), (3) motivation (Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft & Evers, 1987; Gardner, Clement, Smythe & Smythe, 1979; Gardner & Lambert, 1972), (4) attitude (Carroll, 1990; Gardner, Clement, Smythe & Smythe, 1979; Gardner & Lambert, 1972), (5) anxiety (Aida, 1994; Daly,

1991; Horwitz, 1991; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Madsen, Brown & Jones, 1991; McIntyre, 1995; McIntyre & Gardner, 1991a; 1991b; Scovel, 1991; Sparks & Ganschow, 1995; Young, 1991a; 1991b).

Previous studies showed that there was a foreign language anxiety about learning a foreign language among foreign language learners. Several researchers have expressed concern about students' anxiety in learning foreign language (Campbell & Ortiz, 1991; Cope-Powel, 1991; Muchnick & Wolfe, 1982; Price, 1991). Moreover, some researchers have reported that foreign language anxiety is a pervasive phenomenon (Foss & Reitzel, 1988; Lucas, 1984; McCoy, 1979; Powell, 1991; Price, 1991; Schumann, 1975).

Some of these studies showed no clear-cut relationship between foreign language learners' anxiety and their foreign language achievements. Some researchers showed a negative correlation between the two variables. Some reported that there was a positive correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, some claimed that there was no significant correlation between anxiety and the foreign language learners' achievement.

Chastain (1975) reported a significant negative correlation between course grade and anxiety score in a French audiolingual class. In other words, the higher the anxiety score the lower the course grade in the French audiolingual class. However, he also reported that students

in regular French, German, and Spanish classes showed the contrary. In these three regular classes, the students who had higher levels of anxiety were more likely to have better grades than the students who had lower levels of anxiety.

Backman (1976), investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and the foreign language progress among Venezuelan students and the result showed no significant correlation between the two variables.

Kleinmann (1977) found that anxiety negatively correlated with students' oral production of linguistically difficult structures such as infinitive complements or passive sentences. However, he also reported that there was not enough evidence to say that there was a correlation between anxiety and foreign language oral performance.

Scovel (1978) pointed out that anxiety's role in language learning is confusing. According to Scovel, there have been some questions about whether anxiety exerts an important influence on second language learning.

Young (1986) investigated a correlation between anxiety and oral proficiency in three foreign languages (French, German, and Spanish). She reported that there were some negative correlations between students' oral proficiency interview scores and some of the anxiety measures. However, when foreign language ability measured by dictation test and the variability due to foreign language ability was removed from the study, the correlation between oral proficiency

interview scores and anxiety measures were not significant. These results are predictable since foreign language ability is likely to correlate with foreign language achievement. So, when foreign language ability is held constant, there is a small probability that the oral proficiency interview scores will covary with anxiety measures. By this procedure, the nonsignificant correlation can not warrant that anxiety is not correlated with achievement, because the anxiety measures used may not accurately detect students' anxiety levels in oral proficiency interview.

These phenomena revealed that foreign language anxiety can be viewed as a positive factor to motivate students to study harder but on the other hand anxiety can be viewed as a negative factor in foreign language learning which may interfere students' achievement.

Alpert & Haber (1960) reported that anxiety could be viewed as a positive factor (facilitating anxiety) which motivates learners. However, many researchers reported that anxiety may prevent a learner from achieving a high level of foreign language proficiency (Gardner, Smythe, Clement & Gliksman, 1976; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1991; Kleinman, 1977; McIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Mettler, 1987; Tucker, Hamayan & Genesee, 1976; Young, 1986). Researchers who suspect that anxiety may interfere with the language learner's proficiency indicate that foreign language

learners may have a mental block, similar to someone in a speech-making or in a test-taking situation.

Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) identified foreign language anxiety as a conceptually distinct variable in foreign language learning and interpreted it in the context of existing theoretical and empirical work on specific anxiety reactions. They suggested that there is likely to be a strong negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and foreign language proficiency. That is, the more anxious a foreign language learner is in learning a foreign language, the lower his/her foreign language proficiency will be. They also cited listening and speaking, especially impromptu speaking, as the main sources of anxiety. They discussed the bad effects of this anxiety on language learning and on other pedagogical aspects.

Some studies have shown a relationship between foreign language attitudes and the foreign language grade (Roberts, 1983), status of the foreign language -- required or not required -- (Morello, 1988), usefulness of the foreign language (Byrness, 1988), method of teaching (Dresser, 1990), performance of the instructor (Defoe, 1986), self confidence (Briere, 1984), students' foreign language background (Liebman-Kleine, 1986; Schnell, 1991), students' expectations (Schnell, 1991), and gender (Twentyman & McFall, 1975). However, Hadiyono & Kahn (1984) and Aida

(1994) reported that no significant differences based on gender.

Raymond and Roberts (1983) reported that the more positive students' attitudes were the higher their grade predictions were. Morello (1988) revealed that students have much more positive attitudes toward required language study. Moreover, students expressed the conviction that study a foreign language should be required in a university education. Byrness (1988) reported the positive relationship between students' attitudes and the humanistic value of language study. Method of teaching was also a significant contribution to the language learners' attitudes. Creative teaching method reduced the students' fear of speaking (Dresser, 1990). Similar findings were showed by Defoe (1986) who reported that a positive teacher's role helped the students in learning foreign language. Briere (1984) found that the more confidence the students had in learning the foreign language the more positive their attitude was.

In summary, while on the one hand, the teaching of foreign language is very important in American education but on the other hand, there is anxiety among students who take a foreign language class. Based upon this phenomenon, a study which investigates the students' attitude toward foreign language (SAFL) provide valuable information.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The purpose of this study are: (1) to develop the students' attitude toward foreign language (SAFL) scale, (2) to evaluate the quality of the SAFL, and (3) to define the underlying dimensions that comprise the students' attitude toward foreign language.

PROCEDURE

Subjects for this study consist of students who take foreign language classes at the University of Alabama. The total sample is 173 students. The subjects could be further categorized according to foreign language taken, gender, and other demographic variables. However, subjet categorization is not an important issue for this paper at this time.

Development of Instrument

The SAFL instrument was developed based upon theoretical construct, literature review, and table specification.

Previous studies showed that some variables are factors of students' attitude toward foreign language. The first one is a foreign language anxiety among foreign language learners (Aida, 1994; Daly, 1991; Foss & Reitzel, 1988; Horwitz, 1991; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Lucas, 1984; Madsen, Brown & Jones, 1991; McCoy, 1979; McIntyre, 1995; McIntyre & Gardner, 1991a; 1991b; Powell, 1991; Price, 1991; Schumann, 1975 Scovel, 1991; Sparks & Ganschow, 1995; Young, 1991a; 1991b). The

second one is self confidence (Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft & Evers, 1987; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, Smythe, Clement & Gliksman, 1976; Pimsleur, 1968; Pimsleur, Sunderland & McIntyre, 1964). The third one is self interest in a foreign language/required or non required course (Aida, 1994; Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft & Evers, 1987; Gardner, Clement, Smythe & Smythe, 1979; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The fourth one is family background in foreign language (Liebman-Kleine, 1986; Schnell, 1991). The fifth one is gender (Aida, 1994; Hadiyono & Kahn, 1984; Twentyman & McFall, 1975). The sixth one is students' motivation/usefulness of the foreign language (Byrness, 1988; Gardner, 1985; Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft & Evers, 1987; Gardner, Clement, Smythe & Smythe, 1979; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The seventh one is students' effort (Raymond & Roberts, 1983; Carroll, 1990; Gardner, Clement, Smythe & Smythe, 1979; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Finally, the eighth one is instructor's role (Aida, 1994, Comeau, 1992; Defoe, 1986; Dresser, 1990; Terrel, 1977). Theoretically, based on literature, these variables above are factors of the students' attitude toward foreign language.

Based on the variables above, the items are constructed. The specification of items based on the variables are as follows:

Variable Foreign Language Anxiety, items:

1. A foreign language makes me anxious.
2. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm to be called in my foreign language class.
3. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
4. In a foreign language class, I can get so nervous I forget the things I know.
5. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my foreign language class.

Variable Self Confidence, items:

6. Learning a foreign language is easy for me.
7. I can speak a foreign language better than the majority of people in my class.

Variable Self Interest, items:

8. I like studying foreign languages.
9. I enjoy listening to a foreign language.
10. I enjoy using a foreign language.
11. I find a foreign language is very interesting subject.
12. If foreign language were not required for my major I would not take one.

Variable Family Background in Foreign Language, items:

13. My mother likes a foreign language, so I will.
14. My father likes a foreign language, so I will.
15. At least one of my family members likes a foreign

language.

Variable Gender, items:

16. I feel that study of language is only for women.

17. I feel that majority of women achieve better than men in this class.

Variable Motivation/Usefulness, items:

18. A foreign language is very useful in my major.

19. A foreign language will be important for my future career.

20. I will be more competent in my area when I master a foreign language.

Variable Students' Effort, items:

21. It takes a great deal of effort for me to master a foreign language.

22. I study a foreign language regularly even when there is no specific assignment.

23. I see my instructors when I do not understand something in my foreign language class.

24. I ask questions in my foreign language class when I do not understand.

Variable Instructor's role, items:

25. I like the course because of my instructor's method of teaching.

26. The instructor's friendliness in answering students questions helps me to like a foreign language.

27. The instructor's explanations help me to like a foreign language.

Students rated themselves based upon the SAFL instrument which consists of a set of Likert-type statements (27 items) which allow students to reflect their responses as NOT DESCRIBE ME to DESCRIBES ME with the range from 1 to 5 respectively.

RESULT

Item Analysis

Item analysis in general showed that most of the items have means above the "ideal". In other words, most of the items showed that the students' attitude toward foreign language are positive. Logically, because the scale of the instrument is range from 1 to 5, the "ideal" average is 3. So, if an item has means below 3 it shows that the students' attitude toward foreign language represented by that item is negative. On the contrary, if an item has means greater than 3 it shows that the students' attitude toward foreign language represented by that item is positive. Since most of the items have means greater than 3, we can conclude that in general the students' attitude toward foreign language for this population is positive. The standard deviation of each item is range from .98 to 1.65 (Table 1). The index of

discrimination for each item also can be seen from item to total correlation (Table 1), and they are high.

Items Dropped

Some of the items are dropped in the final instrument chosen. The criteria chosen to drop the items are low item to total correlation (Table 1), and alpha if item deleted. Based upon the criteria, items 13, 14, 17, and 21 are dropped from the final instrument.

Reliability

The final reliability Cronbach Alpha is .8712 with the Standardized item alpha is .8704. Based on this measurement, the instrument is reliable to use for the purpose of measuring the students' attitude toward foreign language. Of course, some revisions of the instrument can be done to improve its reliability.

The standard error of measurement (SEM) of the instrument is 5.42 with standard deviation = 15.03.

Validity

Validity is achieved by Content Validity and Construct Validity since the instrument is constructed based on theoretical construct, literature review, table specification, experts judgement, and good item to total

correlation. Concurrent/predictive validity is not an applicable issue for this instrument at this time.

Underlying Dimensions of the Instrument

Factor analysis is used to determine the underlying dimensions of the instrument. The method of principal axis with Principal Factor analysis and Varimax orthogonal rotation is used for this study. The criteria used to choose the number of factors are Eigen Value greater than 1, the percent of variance explained by the chosen factor structure, and the scree plot. Based on the criteria above four factors are retained (Table 2). The factors are: (1) Motivation, (2) Students' Effort and Instructor's Role, (3) Self Confidence & Self Interest, and (4) Students' Anxiety.

The percent varianced explained by each factor are: 17.52 % by factor 1, 14.33 % by factor 2, 10.35 % by factor 3, and 10.33 % by factor 4. The total communality of estimates is 12.08.

The factors chosen are modification of the theoretical construct. Factor 2 and Factor 3 represent combinations of some variables in the theoretical construct.

Conclusions

The instrument can be used to measure students' attitude toward foreign language. In order to get a better picture of the students' attitude toward foreign language,

it might be better to get the subjects from not only the students who take the beginner foreign language class but also the intermediate and the advanced foreign language classes.

REFERENCES

Abdraboh, B. 1986. Marketing across cultures: issues, problems, and opportunities. Language and Communication for World Business and the Professions Conference Proceedings, FL 017 281, Michigan.

Aida, Y. 1994. Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: The case of students of Japanese. Modern Language Journal, 78, 155-168.

Bilyeu, E. E. 1982. Practice makes closer to perfect: Alternative techniques for teaching foreign languages to learning disabled students in the university. Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education Project #116CH 10305. Ellensburg: Central Washington University.

Briere, J. F. 1984. Cultural understanding through cross-cultural analysis. ERIC ED262577.

Byrnes, H. 1988. How do you get there from here? Articulating the foreign language major program. ADFL Bulletin, 20, (1), 35-38.

Carroll, J. 1990. Cognitive abilities in foreign language aptitude: Then and now. Language Aptitude Reconsidered. Eds. Thomas Parry & Charles Stansfield. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Defoe, T. A. 1986. English as a second language teachers and culture: an interview study of role perception. Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia.

Dresser, C. H. 1990. Successful and practical intercultural communication techniques. Paper Presented at the Eastern Michigan University Conference on Language and Communications for World Business and the Profession, 9th, Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Hadiyono, J. E. P & Kahn, M. W. 1984. Personality differences and sex similarities in American and Indonesian college students. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Psychological Association, 64th, Los Angeles.

Horwita, E. K. 1986. Foreign language classroom anxiety. Modern Language Journal, 70, (2), 135-42.

Liebman-Kleine, J. A. 1986. Toward a contrastive new rhetoric--a rhetoric of process. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 20th, Anaheim, California.

Lowernberg, P. H. 1990. Language identity and the Asian state: Indonesia. Georgetown Journal of Languages and Linguistics, 1, (1), 109-20.

Morello, J. 1988. Attitudes of students of French toward required language study. Foreign Language Annals, 21, (5), 435-42.

Papalia, A. 1984. A model of instruction for integrating culture and language. ERIC ED262576.

Raymon, M. K. & Roberts, D. M. 1983. Development and validation of a foreign language attitude scale. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 43, (4), 1239-46.

Rifenbary, D. 1991. An introduction to multicultural issues in career development. Division of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education, Department of Education, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Schnell, J. 1991. The need for nonverbal communication theory when teaching English as a second language: a case study in China. ERIC ED336951.

Schlossstein, S. 1991. Asia's New Little Dragon: The Dynamic Emergence of Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. Contemporary Books, Inc. Chicago.

Webb, M. 1990. Multicultural education in elementary and secondary schools. ERIC Digest, 67, Clearinghouse on Urban Education. New York.

Item Analysis Data

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Item to total correlation
1	3.50	1.20	.12
2	3.80	1.25	.38
3	4.33	1.04	.34
4	3.54	1.33	.42
5	4.14	1.05	.53
6	2.95	1.17	.47
7	2.58	1.19	.40
8	3.40	1.34	.82
9	3.57	1.32	.74
10	3.58	1.23	.76
11	3.81	1.17	.78
12	3.28	1.65	.59
13	1.49	.98	.09
14	1.51	1.00	.11
15	2.52	1.59	.36
16	4.65	.87	.17
17	4.02	1.29	-.05
18	2.97	1.56	.65
19	3.01	1.54	.65
20	2.95	1.52	.60
21	3.42	1.21	-.15
22	2.37	1.19	.36
23	2.96	1.34	.46
24	3.92	1.13	.47
25	4.08	1.18	.48
26	4.18	1.15	.44
27	4.03	1.21	.52
TOTAL	56.80	15.03	

Pinciple Component Analysis of Students' Attitude Toward Foreign Language Instrument : A Four-Factor Solution With a Varimax Rotation N=23

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Communality Estimates
19	.86				.76
18	.86				.75
20	.79				.65
12	.64				.44
08	.61				.81
22	.43				.28
15	.35				.16
27		.84			.74
26		.83			.70
25		.77			.67
24		.47			.34
23		.45			.27
16		.31			.13
10			.65		.81
06			.59		.40
09			.55		.69
07			.52		.34
11			.52		.73
02				.78	.63
04				.66	.50
05				.63	.57
03				.60	.49
01				.51	.29
Sum of Squared Factor Loading	4.02	3.30	2.38	2.38	12.08
% of Variance Explained	17.52	14.33	10.35	10.33	52.53

Factor 1 = Motivation
Factor 2 = Effort & Instructor Role
Factor 3 = Self Confidence & Self Interest
Factor 4 = Student's Anxiety